

For Weldon Kees

"And when all your beauty, washed away in
impure streams"

-- W. Kees

Average size slight of build
the eyes heavy lidded alert
at odds with the Prussian moustache
commanding attention like the hands
exploring objects
before the mind's decision
or the wry, warm smile
matching wit and the word
underscoring incongruities.
The film facade the media lies
never broke his spirit, but
pushed him to the wall, over the brink.
He alone chose the way to go.
He could have died like Keats --
instead he took the bridge like Crane
bottoms up sardonic gesture.
Sick of looking at Hoover buttons
on dead executives' lapels,
the widening crack in the wall,
the spreading stain on the carpet,
he rejected the rhetoric of knives, booze, guns.
He knew all the tricks were a prelude
to the fall of the magicians -- an omen
I overlooked in my presentation copy
of The Last Man. He knew then
the game was up the rest
mere repetition. Even death.

For My Daughters: Susan and Aprille

When I am gone
grow as gardens grow
come summer or come snow
time is on your side
from where I sit:
forgive me later
what I now omit.